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# This Side of the Misty Sea, Where Wynken, Blynken and Nod Saw Off the Kitty's Tale

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### 1. Finding Eugene Field

August. Antiquers squatted at the mall, flea-market style. Their makeshift sawhorse tables clotted the mall's strict corridors. Overpriced knick-knackery, costume jewelry and baseball cards, reproduced pick-aninny salt and pepper shakers, cracked pottery . . . ahhh. In response to brand-new/on-sale/with-weak-seams, I opted for the wares of a vintage book dealer. I read spines for half an hour, flipped and raised dust. Looking for out-dated illustrations of the world. And then.

I opened a primer, slender and ugly, to the title "Sleepy Kitty."

The Cat is Asleep on the Rug. Step on her Tail and See if she will Wake up. Oh, no; She will not wake, she is a heavy sleeper. Perhaps if you Were to saw her Tail off with the Carving knife you might Attract her attention. Suppose you try.

The illustration showed a small boy with a carving knife about to de-tail a cat, the boy's back to the reader.

*Indeed*, I said to myself agreeing with myself, gripping the book like a winning ticket, *this is bizarre*.

The mallers clopped by. Into Claire's where earrings dangled. Into Target to get their kids backpacks for the new school year, see-through plastic both a fashion statement and, for some public schools since the Columbine massacre, a requirement to inhibit gun-toting. Into Bath & Body Works to abuse testers. Into the Gap.

On the opposite page of this primer, an illustration of an unlucky child, only the bottom of two little feet visible as she's falling headlong into a well:

The Well is Dark and Deep. There is Nice Cool Water in the Well. If you Lean way Over the Side, maybe you will Fall in the Well and down in the Dear Water. We will Give you some Candy if you will Try. There is a Sweet Little Birdie in the Bottom of the Well. Your Mamma would be Surprised to find you in the Well, would she not?

I paid the book-dealer \$10 without quibble.

Without even knowing what I bought.

*The Tribune Primer*, by Eugene Field. Illustrations — crude and inexact in proportion by John C. Frohn — accompanied Field's little paragraphs. The first edition of not over 50 copies was released in 1882, according to editor's notes. The inscription on this edition, in a trained cursive: "My dear wife Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> 1901 Fred."

I left the mall for once with an obscurity in my hands.

Who is Eugene Field? Who is the intended audience for his satire? Who in 1882 could get away with a deliciously gory pre-Gorey sketch like this one, entitled "The Gun"? (Its illustration shows two little children blowing down the barrels of a rifle.)

This is a gun. Is the Gun loaded? Really, I do not know. Let us Find out. Put the Gun on the table and you, Susie, blow down one barrel, while you, Charlie, blow down the other. Bang! Yes, it was loaded. Run, quick, Jennie, and pickup Susie's head and Charlie's lower Jaw before the Nasty Blood gets over the New carpet.

Eugene Field (1850-1895), known as "the first of the columnists," bucked traditions, including those of the life-long career that famed him originally: journalism. One biographer claimed that "the serious business of news gathering bored him. He interlarded his interviews with extraneous flights of fancy that enlivened the copy and invited libel suits, which came to naught, because few lawyers wanted to sue a joke and catch a crab."<sup>1</sup> Copycat versions of his *Chicago Tribune* column "Sharps and Flats" (1883-1895) sprouted in ink nation-wide, and continue to be popular today. Prior to this success in Chicago, Field was editor of *The Denver Tribune* (1881-1883), and while in Denver he wrote approximately 100 sketches (also called paragraphs, or skits, sometimes satiric verse, or nonsense, and his original column-title for them: "Odds and Ends"). These sketches became *The Tribune Primer*. And they were soon dismissed, supposedly by Field himself who, despite his *Primer's* many injured and dead children,<sup>2</sup> became known by 1888 throughout America as the "Poet of Childhood."

Field's reign as the children's poet began with "Little Boy Blue" in 1888, a poem about dusty toys on a shelf awaiting the child who died in his sleep, the child who "toddling off to his trundle bed . . . dreamt of the pretty toys:

And as he was dreaming, an angel song  
 Awakened our Little Boy Blue —  
 Oh, the years are many, the years are long —  
 But the little toy friends are true!

This loyalty to the deceased child was, in its way, original to the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century and before, high mortality rates for infants inhibited this kind of parent-child bond assumed today as immediate, and even when children endured their germ-susceptible first years, families were large (by 1800, completed family size in the U.S. averaged 7.04 persons, compared to 3.56 a century later<sup>3</sup>), and labor on the farm or in mills was inevitable for many by age ten, rendering childhood's jump-rope and dolly more or less irrelevant.<sup>4</sup> The working class eighteenth-century family has the socio-historical reputation of valuing children "economically" as prospective laborers, necessary to keep the family in taters and cook-wood.



Science's advances and industry's boom in the nineteenth century spared and exploited children, respectively. Basic discoveries in bacteriology enlightened parents as to the germ-theory behind washing hands and isolating the contagiously sick. And for infants not breast-fed, boiling milk and sterilizing bottles were precautions finally introduced around 1890 (Preston and Harris 32).

This, along with a cultural shedding of Calvinism, shifted the child's position in the family dynamic — a sort of "revolution in domestic life" according to the *Journal of Family History*. Families were becoming "less patriarchal and authoritarian, more affectionate and child-centered" (Cartwright 316).

The 1991 study *Fatal Years: Child Mortality in Late Nineteenth Century America*, however, submits that not until the first decades of the twentieth century did the principle of *social responsibility* for infant mortality gain full acceptance in our country (Preston and Harris 31). In 1900, rich as the States were, 18% of its population were dying before the age of five, among the world's worst rates.<sup>5</sup> More and more common, child labor trapped one in six children aged 10-15; a third of all Southern mill workers were children (31). It was this epidemic that ultimately shifted the child socially into preciousness. The child-hero Oliver Twist was born of this epidemic, and as French children's literature historian Isabelle Jan points out:

It was not until children were seen to be victims at the hands of their seniors that the fictional child-hero stood a chance of coming alive . . . . Forced labor, the crime committed against childhood in all nineteenth century industrialized countries, turned childhood into an object of pity.

(93)



This phenomenon tightened the family unit in such a way that Field's poem "Little Boy Blue" served more as a comfort to a new kind of anxiously devoted parent than it did a lullaby for a child. Field's own family typified an emerging family in the last decades of child-expendability and outrageous child mortality in America, in the first days of "maternalism," a mother/child-centered movement that anticipated suffragism (Rollet 50). An early biographer claimed that Field in his day "did more to elevate motherhood than any other writer" (Below 77). Field as a husband and father may have adhered to the era's chivalrous code of protecting the wife, comforting the mother, shielding the daughters, but in children's poems like "Little Boy Blue," his primary concern is the comforting of the mother in every parent, radically including himself. The original *nouveau pere* he was and "like a mother" he was devoted unabashedly to his eight children and his many collected dolls.

In his most-often cited "Wynken, Blynken and Nod," the "fishermen three" sail to sea one night in a wooden shoe, to cast their nets for herring. The mysterious comforts of night sky and sea are conflated ("The little stars were the herring fish"), exalting sleep (i.e., death) as a naturalized heaven, making almost pagan the r.e.m. in which moon and tide carry the innocent child. The misty sea is a place where the child can cast nets wherever he or she wishes, the little fishermen "never afeard" with nets of silver and gold.

This poem may not overtly allude to child death like "Little Boy Blue," but its parallel of sleep and a naturalistic heaven, its ambiguous reference to "bringing the fishermen home," and its mention of the trundle bed as per "Little Boy Blue," allows the adult an easy double-read. "Wynken, Blynken and Nod" consoles one house's grieving parents just as it lulls the sleepy, healthy child in another.

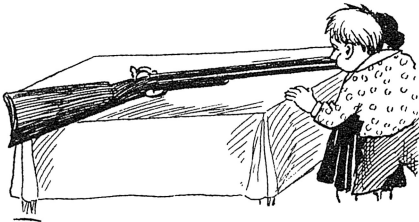
Much like the grief-stricken parlour song "Near the Lake Where Droop'd the Willow," popular at the same time, Field's poem proposes a safe, other place to which go our dear-departed, and what's more — a natural, therefore tangible, perhaps even familiar place. In a 1993 article "Changing Attitudes to Death: Nineteenth Century Parlour Songs as Consolation Literature," the fear of hell is said to be "fading next to the fear of lost love and the growing loneliness of an increasingly rootless society. Consolation was found in the concept of a heaven that was a home-away-from-home" (Atkinsons 85). And "Near the Lake" was a model for countless parlour songs after it that took on the point of view of the griever whose love has died, and persisted in equating the lost beloved with nature, revealing how Americans were beginning to see death in the realm of nature more than the judiciary of religion (Atkinsons 79, 81). As for Field, his persisting theme that death was not punishment for the child, but a gate to eternal life (Conrow 23) is hailed by one biographer: "He twines a wreath about the life and the 'falling asleep' of this child . . . Grim death is eternally lost in its beauty" (Below 67).

"Wynken, Blynken and Nod," however syrupy and subtle, in hindsight can be read as part of a gently subversive wave: a sensitized awareness of child mortality meets a nostalgia-wrought responsibility to ensure the state of childhood be a happy one, all in response to Calvinism's predestination, industry's exploitation, and a century pivoting on science.

As I said, Field was famed originally as “the first columnist,” and though he may have written several volumes of “serious” poetry (like *The Clink of the Ice*), his nobility in the history of American popular culture is as “The Children’s Poet Laureate.” My research then technically satisfied the question “Who is Eugene Field?” but I was at this point unable to reconcile the violent satire in *The Tribune Primer* and the sugar-starry consolation of his lullaby poems. What bridged them? How did this intersect in Field as a person, as an icon? Why were both so long ago “dismissed” into obscurity?

“Wynken, Blynken and Nod” was no more than a memorable title to me, not even one from my own childhood. I remember Opie Taylor on “The Andy Griffith Show,” after killing a mother bird with a slingshot, adopted its orphans and named them Wynken, Blynken and Nod. And under the topic “Modes of Transport” in a final round of “Jeopardy!” the answer was “They sailed in a wooden shoe.” At the tavern, the boozers’ play on Field’s title goes: “Drinkin’, Blinkin’ and Noddin’.” When I asked my grandmothers about “Little Boy Blue” each answered “Come blow your horn,” quoting an entirely different poem not written by Field. (They did, I should mention, know “Wynken, Blynken and Nod” immediately.) Marginalized in the canons of children’s literature, Field is not mentioned once in Gillian Avery’s *Behold the Child; American Children and Their Books 1621-1922* until the postscript, where he’s cast “on a lower literary level” into the lot of “garden-fairy verse” writers.

After his death in 1895, Field’s poems were standard in most



schools, recited by children everywhere, yet I have a suspicion that it was teachers and parents that assigned or requested Eugene Field, as it was an adult audience that benefited from Field’s nostalgia and consolation. I have a second suspicion that Field’s title “Children’s Poet Laureate” was an invention of his peers rather than a matter laid to some kind of vote (as the possessive

title implies). These suspicions are not meant to deny Field’s importance to nineteenth century American children (mostly white children, perhaps), nor should they cast doubt on his sincerity as their laureate. Listen to this:

I thank you very much for the lovely doll you sent me . . . Lucy is indeed a charming little lady, and I am sure that she will enjoy life in the large family of dolls I am gathering together. I should like to meet with you and talk with you about the many sacrifices such folk as you and I have to make in order to clothe and educate our beloved dollies as we feel they should be clothed and educated . . . I hope my dear little friend that I shall never outgrow my love and reverence for that sacred instinct which the fondness for these little pets reveals.

(Burt and Cable 133)

This letter to a little girl would not have been considered spurious by his peers and friends. And at the same time, he was known to stick his tongue out at children in public and set them bawling. In Field's poems he consoled grieving parents and provided adults with nostalgic embraces of childhood, but he otherwise referred to this popular verse as "mother rot" and he was not afraid to be critical in his column of parents and adults who "set about killing the juvenile fancy as soon as it discovers itself" (Conrow 116). We now say pretending or making believe, but for Field "juvenile fancy" meant lying.

The duality of Field represents a conflicted response to the changing role of the child in late nineteenth century America. As *precious* (to be protected, innocent) and as *precocious* (unusually mature at an early age, popularly perceived as showing "spunk" via fancy and/or independence), the new American child romped where values collided. And though she or he may not have read the violent satire in *The Tribune Primer*, this vein in Field — as an eccentric children's icon — defied notions of propriety, adulthood, and its platitudes.

One dimension of Field's mythification as the "Children's Poet Laureate" is *The Tribune Primer's* dismissal by peers and devotees determined to preserve Field's reputation. The day after his death at age 45, his "Sharps and Flats" column was replaced with reproductions of his two most popular poems "Wynken" and "Little Boy Blue." Field's eulogist called for children everywhere to erect monuments in Field's honor. A story circulated about a single white rose in Field's folded hands, from a poverty-stricken grief-ridden extra-sad little girl begging 'round the florist's shop. Though hardly a conspiracy, each of these reactions to Field's early death de-emphasized Field's career as a journalist and satirist. His family and biographers took Field's idealization even further.

Field's brother wrote in a posthumous edition of Field's *A Little Book of Western Verse*, "The publication of *The [Tribune] Primer*, while adding to his reputation as a humorist, happily did not satisfy him" (xxxvii). Happily? Field's brother has claimed elsewhere that "Eugene at the time thought nothing of the *Primer*, and, indeed, never sent me a copy" (Ashley 191). Field's brother assured his dear-departed, "Sleep in the assurance that those who loved you will always cherish the memory of that love as the tender inspiration of your gentle spirit" (xivii). Not his bawdy spirit, the side that told fart jokes, or as Field's first really objective biographer, Conrow, calls it, Field's "rabelaisian nature."

Robert Conrow exposed the Field myth and brought to light much of Field's "sub-rosa" works, ones more akin to the satire in *The Tribune Primer*, as well as Field's notoriety as a prankster, his willingness to costume himself as a maid named Camille when the real Camille abandoned her post mid-meal, the thespian scene he partied with, his underground fame at men's clubs as master of bawdy rhyme, the unfounded rumors that he really disliked all children but his own. Conrow presents his readers with a Field that wore "the respectable garb" of his title, "fitted and maintained" by devoted peers (99). But he does not disqualify Field as a fraud; he equates Field's pranksterism with his satire, both developed to undermine adult airs, hence locating *The Tribune Primer* in a realm of works that spoke more directly and subversively to children than did any of his child-recited "mother rot."

As do the works of Field's peer Mark Twain, Field's *Primer* twists the knife into an adult world full of hypocrisy. Twain, known in "proper" circles as mag-

nate Samuel Clemens, lambasted those same circles in works like *Tom Sawyer* that gave the finger to “improving tales” and addressed the child as an equal, encouraged the child to disobey, to run away, to get out of chores, to see through adult pretenses. Just as Charles Dodgson taught mathematics and became Lewis Carroll inciting daydreams, just as Theodore Geisel started out in advertising and ended up in Whoville with a Grinch stealing Christmas, the “split personality” is not uncommon in the realm of children’s literature (Jurie 7-8). Field is another example, but one long-lost. His really subversive works were buried for the posterity of his nostalgic verse that, in turn, would not survive realism and the gaining cynicism of twentieth century kids.

Field’s gendering and sexuality as they show through history’s veil is compelling, but I am not going to put myself in a position here to debate binaries like feminine or masculine, gay or straight, etc. If the concept of “queerness” can be expanded to include anyone who somehow challenges or destabilizes heterosexist values, then Field can certainly be considered in these terms. He doted on his dollies, indulged in drag as comic, and pranked all of Denver into thinking a touring Oscar Wilde was arriving a day early, parading down Main Street in the famous dandy’s costume. Field himself was a bit of a dandy, though not in attire so much as reputation: his notorious salon, his love of perfumes, and the theater crowd that he ran with. Conrow writes: “Field, like Twain, deeply resented that the expression of sexuality seemed to have taken a backward turn since ancient times” (133).

Field clearly loved his wife and their eight children, and nowhere is there a suggestion that Field was homosexual. What interests me is that he seemed to be so “out” in other ways (his sincere love of dolls, for one) that could in a gender-strict era cast suspicion on his inclinations regardless of actual straightness. He nonetheless found a loyal audience at distinctly homosocial “Men’s Clubs” where he was Rated X and all the rage. This suggests that Field’s strength was recognizing and playing to specific audiences: newspaper readers, parents (especially mothers) and children, and fraternal men. This may also suggest that Field occupied all these positions in the spectrum of being himself.

The most controversial of Field’s bawdy works is “Little Willie” and it provides an interesting insight into Field’s (seemingly liminal) sexuality. Conrow gives Field’s bawdy verses thorough attention in *Field Days*, much of which is scatological and like *Primer* sketches in the ways they manage to gross out propriety. Other bawdy verses involve “loose women” (mostly as Field has encountered them running around with actors and actresses) enacting transgressions that also gross out more than tantalize with the image of fornication. “Little Willie” suggests an alternative to heterosexual male desire, to sexual desire in general, through both intentional perversity and shocking innocence. The third and final stanzas, usually censored, involve a man who prefers the company of his bedwetting son to sexualized women:

Tis many time that rascal has  
Soaked all the bedclothes through,  
Whereat I’d feebly light the gas  
And wonder what to do.  
Yet there he lay, so peaceful like;

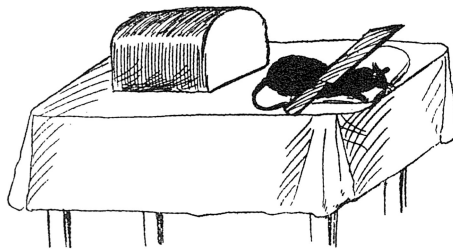
God bless his curly head,  
I quite forgave this little tyke  
For wetting the bed.

Had I my choice, no shapely dame  
Should share my couch with me,  
No amorous jade of tarnished fame,  
Nor wench of high degree;  
But I would choose and choose again  
The little curly head,  
Who cuddled close behind me when  
He used to wet the bed.

According to biographer Conrow, it was not the idea of a grown man reflecting nostalgically on the bed he shared with his own weak-bladdered son that set off the Society for Suppression of Vice, but the reference to wenches (Estes 175; Conrow 116). My very first response to “Little Willie” was to read it through a contemporary awareness of pedophilia and piss-fetish, not a nineteenth century sensitivity to the mention of prostitutes. My conclusion is that the poem is nostalgic, privileging a non-sexualized intimacy with one’s child and all his flaws (to put it politely) *over* the woman as sexual conquest. This certainly removes Field from the most secular standard of heterosexual masculinity presumably upheld in Men’s Clubs, and as I said of the verses Field recited that did uphold such standards, they rarely titillated so much as they transgressed propriety. Field was, after all, much more a “bad boy” than a “lady’s man.”

Field’s nemesis — well, his only detractor, reviewer William Marion Reedy — considered Field’s bawdy verse the “real” Field, disregarding his children’s poems as the “selling out of a rank unsentimentalist” (Conrow 88). I perceive Eugene Field as all of the above, as multi-spirited: satirist and sentimentalist, journalist and poet, common man and dandy man, dirty mind and tender heart, a rebel and a cause, a prankster but with mouths to feed, one of the first maternal husbands, and always a grown-up child.

To understand, finally, *The Tribune Primer*, I sought out the text that Field’s primer parodied: *The New England Primer*. Six million copies were printed between 1680 and 1830, and though Field was not born until 1850, he did not escape the long shadow of this text’s religiously thorned instruction. A 1749 version offered the letter F with this abstract example: “Foolishness is bound up in the Heart of a Child, / but the Rod of Correction shall drive it from him” (Lystad 39). An 1830 version spouts a more consumer-oriented prayer: “See first, I say, the living God / And always Him adore, / And then be sure that he



will bless / Your basket and your store" (214).

Child-literature historian Mary Lystad explains that "the major portion of the Primer . . . included the Dialogue between Christ, Youth, and the Devil, in which Youth succumbs to the Devil, repents at the sight of Death, but is too late to save his own life or enjoy an afterlife with God" (40). Field's consolatory lullabies provide an alternative to this traumatizing narrative fate, while his *Tribune Primer*, with its outright perversion of *The New England Primer's* lesson format, including the capitalization of merited words and the mock-moral tones, brings together a parody of a Calvinistic educational text with the specific satirization of Denver, which to Field typified America's urbanizing communities that forsook their working classes while privileging bourgeois mundanities. And what's more, according to Conrow, "In Denver, Field's position seemed to hold that the child's most corrupting influence came from a society which 'educated' children by merely imbuing them with illusory standards of the larger society" (97). Education as an adult institution gets lampooned in *Tribune Primer* sketches like "Mental Arithmetic." Much like Lewis Carroll's Mad Hatter regurgitating Alice's erudition and logos, Field loves to riddle-up the standard quiz.

If a Horse weighing 1,600 pounds can Haul four tons of Pig Iron, how many Seasons will a Front Gate painted Blue carry a young Woman on one side and a young Man on the other?

I was beginning to see Field through the webs of myth and time. Part of him responded to childhood as a new kind of parent, and part of him responded to childhood as a perpetual child. Despite Field's subtitles to "Odds and Ends" ("Tales Designed for the Information and Edification of the Nursery Brigade" and "Pretty Stories for the Pleasure and Profit of Little Children"), his sketches and then the *Primer* were read by adults for the most part (see my edition's inscription, "My dear wife..."). If children experienced Field's *Primer*, or his original column, it was inadvertently, or clandestinely, which I am sure gave more thrill than Field's recitables. What did they think of the representations of children and violence? How did they negotiate the cruelties to babies and pets? How did they take the tones that dared them to tempt pain and fatality, that promised picture books for petting wasps?

As mentioned in footnote two, fifty-seven of *The Tribune Primer's* ninety-four sketches directly address children or the child's world.<sup>6</sup> In terms of violence, this "half" of the primer can be broken down into three categories: Sketches that:

- A) encourage children's transgressions via the courting of their own injury, demise, or punishment
- B) encourage children's transgressions via cruel tricks (endangering or hurting others, including pets)
- C) expose the reality of violence and hypocrisy in home and school (adult institutions)

Of the sketches that encourage the child to risk punishment, the scenario becomes formulaic: a child not only breaks a rule, but takes delight in it.

Scratching “nice pictures” on the piano, leaving coaldust handprints on wallpaper, getting ink on the lace curtains, eating all the jam, or the pears, and sticking-up the family album, all variations on splashing in the “delightful mudhole,” as Field called it. Selma G. Lanes in *Down the Rabbit Hole: Adventures and Misadventures in the Realm of Children’s Literature* extends the analogy when she points out that what is “genuine fun to small children — like squeezing all the toothpaste out of inviting new tubes — is always accompanied by anxiety because retribution is sure to follow” (83). Yes and *ouch*: spanking time / so get the switch / you’re grounded.

Lanes explores the rollercoaster tension in Dr. Seuss, whose *Cat in the Hat* is the quintessential troublemaker text of my childhood and perhaps my generation’s childhood. With mom-will-be-back-any-minute anxiety, Seuss’s Cat breaks rule after rule, encourages the children to do so as well, until the maniacally catchy verse climaxes with an image of the Cat as everybody’s favorite statue: Liberty. Lanes compares Seuss’s version of mudhole-splashing to the orgasmic experience.<sup>7</sup>

There’s something only slightly more wicked about the majority of sketches in category B: tacks in teacher’s chair, mucilage in papa’s slippers, cruel tricks but typical. They, like mudholes, provide an orgasmic experience, without extensive damage to anyone’s person. The most violent injuries and demises in categories A and B overlap with category C’s hypocrisies. An example like “The Gun” suggests that the bourgeois would mourn their new carpets over gun-shot kids, over and above a cautionary message more basically evident in “The Deep Well” and these examples, “The Peach,” and “The Lobster:”

The Child who eats the [green] Peach will be an Angel before he Gets  
a Chance to Eat Another.

The Lobster carries his Teeth on his arm. Pat him on the Teeth.

Cautionary in two ways, I should say: these two sketches caution the child to not eat green peaches or pet lobsters, but as well they condition the child to not trust the adult. After being stung and not getting any pretty picture book, would you trust the adult tone of voice that said “Suppose you eat the Apple, where will the Worm be?” And if you were a child smart enough to “get” parody or nonsense, would you trust conventions that are so parodied? And would you trust Field himself, who as editor of the newspaper repeatedly references himself in his sketches as one of the community’s hypocritical adults?

But what to make of these excerpts from “The Bad Mamma,” “The Piece of Tripe,” and “Papa’s Razor”?

Why is the little Girl crying? Because her Mamma will not let her put Molasses and Feathers on the Baby’s face. What a bad Mamma! The little Girl who never had any Mamma must enjoy herself. Papas are Nicer than Mammias. No little Girl ever Marries a Mamma, and perhaps that is why Mammias are so Bad to little Girls. Never mind; when Mamma goes out of the room, Slap the horrid Baby, and if it cries, you can tell your Mamma it Has the Colic.

Little children never Eat any Kind of Meat at supper unless you Want to Dream about getting Spanked.

What is This we See? It is a Razor . . . Draw it across your Fingers and Make it Dull . . . . A Razor is a Handy Thing to have in a House where there are Corns and Piano Legs to Carve. It is also Just the Thing to Cut off the Kitten's Tail with.

Here the orgasmic and what might be the darkest side of Field emerge together. Might these sketches be related to his parents' home or his own, or to this dark side never confessed in any letter or memoir? There is seemingly no evidence of this dark side in existence according to his last biographer. No secret diaries; perhaps no secrets.

Perhaps. The satiric tone of these sketches is deftly wicked, resonant with tortured psychology, dashed with a sadism too specific to be nonsensical. More deep-seated than simply anti-platitudinal, these sketches involve the reader's (the child's) psychology at vulnerable levels: sexualizing fear of parents, invading dreams with punishment, and then there's always the kitten's tail, an act of sadism in three different sketches. I return to my initial question: Who is Eugene Field?

I am finding no unambiguous answers now, only the dark side of my own childhood, my own personality, in these ambiguous little paragraphs. The dreams of punishment, the resentments that debilitate a parent-child relationship, the thoughts of razors. I may be exaggerating, but to make a point: the children to whom these sketches became accessible were complicated children as always but in a newly industrial culture that as it immured the family, fragmented the family. Field's *Primer* offered no bow-tied morals or tidy answers to life's problems. And the fact that violence happened in the home qualifies "The Game of Croquet" and "Home Sweet Home" as satire that breaks a silence, that complicates thinking while the thoughtless are distracted by the sound of their own laughter.

Here we Have a Game of Croquet. Henry has just hit Nellie with a mallet, and Nellie is calling Henry naughty Names. Their Mother is not much of a Croquet player, but in a minute she will Come out and Beat them Both.

Mamma is Larruping Papa with the Mop Handle. The children are Fighting over a Piece of Pie in the Kitchen. Over the Piano there is a Beautiful Motto in a gilt Frame. The Beautiful Motto says there is no Place like Home.

The humor in these and the most violent of Field's sketches has roots in Southwestern humor. Flourishing in newspapers between 1830 and 1860, this style of humor featured sketches of backwoods life, of pioneering, of Texan babies mastering rattlesnake rattles with live rattlesnakes still attached. Mark Twain comes out of this tradition, which exalts the hard times, and "brags on



the worst" (Miles 4). Field springs from this tradition, and Denver had its own dangers: its guns and larruping folks, its roaches and rats and mice and their diseases, its concentrated lye and oil lamps, all odds and ends for Field. Any baby that endures the brutal odds and ends of toddlerhood, that survives the siblings who pinch his nose shut with a clothes pin, any child who rebels against Math the Oppressor and takes a beating and takes a bullying, any young person who endures the worst should not be ashamed. According to Southwestern Humor and Field's *Tribune Primer*, I should expose it, distort it laughable. Brag on it.

Eugene Field died in his sleep. Out of all his writings, he left only a pamphlet's worth of autobiography, offering among random others these facts and confessions:

I believe in ghosts, in witches, and in fairies. I should like to own a big astronomical telescope, a twenty-four-tune music box. I adore dolls . . . I should like to have the privilege of voting extended to women. I am opposed to capital punishment. I hate wars, armies, guns, and fireworks. I approve of compulsory education. I believe in churches and schools. If I could have my way, I should make the abuse of horses, dogs, and cattle a penal offense; I should abolish all dog-laws and dog-catchers, and I would punish severely anybody who caught and caged birds . . . I am extremely fond of perfumes. My favorite color is red.  
(Burt and Cable 128-29)

## 2. Precious and Precocious Collide: "What have you done to its eyes?"

Today at a diner I heard an old lady say to her old lady friend, "Children are supposed to bury their parents, not the other way around." They nodded at each other, booth to booth, a gentle but absolute gesture. "There's nothing worse than losing a child."

Inarguable cliches. Who would argue with the parent who spoke them?

According to film theorist Vivian Sobchack in her article "Family Economy and Generic Exchange," the secular baby and child have "held a privileged place in bourgeois and patriarchal mythology since the nineteenth century. Infancy and childhood have been represented as the cultural site of such 'positive' virtues as innocence, transparency, and a 'pure' and wonderful curiosity not yet informed by sexuality" (180). Not yet informed by violence, personal and social, I'll add. Ironically, the focus of her article is the modern baby/child in patriarchal culture as made significant in *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and *2001* (1968). *Rosemary's Baby*, like *The Bad Seed* (1956), *The Omen* (1976), and *The Good Son* (1993), suggests a very modern social anxiety: that one's baby/child, which is supposed to signify the future, hope, an untainted beginning, is actually a dubious signifier. Jeffrey Dahmer was once a baby. What looks innocent in the crib may see you — or the world — with the devil's eyes.

Last week I watched a bus, carrying to school a small town's rural kids, skid off an icy road into a frozen lake. This town in Atom Egoyan's 1998 adaptation of Russel Banks' *The Sweet Hereafter* is, of course, forever traumatized.

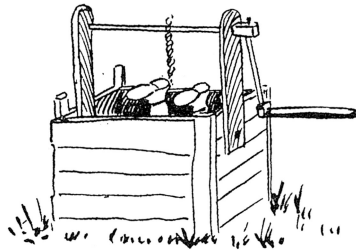
Seeking to represent the parents of the dead children, a city lawyer, whose own daughter is not so precious (a long-tragic junkie), projects a grief more apocalyptic than sad:

We've lost our children. They're dead to us. They're killing each other in the streets. They wander, comatose, the shopping malls. Something terrible has happened that's taken our children away. Too late. They're gone.

The first finger pointed is always at TV and Hollywood representations of violence. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, pre-school children show “unwarranted aggressive behavior” after heavy TV viewing.<sup>9</sup> A “20/20” episode covered a related phenomenon: “small children so violent they even frighten their own parents” evidenced with “startling home video.” Bird-flipping thuggish and slutty kids with pushover moms are featured almost daily on talk shows in the last few years. “Do you have an overweight out of control daughter,” a call for guests asks before going to commercial on “Maury Povich,” “who dresses sexy, is addicted to sex, and you want to give her a makeover?” Staging them like freaks (freakish in that they do drugs or have babies at thirteen or hate their parents, in that they defy “precious” and pervert “precocious”), they are finally subjected to comeuppance: filmed trips to boot camps, prisons, the city street, the soup kitchen. Simultaneously, another wildly popular talk show gimmick is the live drama of paternity test results, expressing a growing instability in the family and a continuing debate over responsibility for child welfare. Television exploits the grimmer side of childhood for ratings, and obnoxiously denies this side in advertising.

Nostalgic about our own precociousness, adults today often appreciate this in kids. Bart Simpson’s popularity, for example. In a general social way, parents and media encourage the child’s fancy (though unlike Field we distinguish “fancy” from lying), but fancy, the imagination, is now commodified. “Of all the journeys you’ll take your kids on, none are more important than flights of fancy,” claims a recent Toys R Us commercial, a toy airplane soaring over housetops. “Non-stop flights leaving daily from the one place that’s all for them.” (Though not represented in the ad, it’s not surprising when the child imagines that innocent toy plane rat-ta-tatting up and down the neighborhood with machine-guns. Or dropping bombs.) The twentieth century has come and gone since Eugene Field’s death, and the child’s role in it, most certainly since the advent of TV advertising, has been with growing intensity as future consumer.

The turn-of-the-millennium kids — “millennials” as titled by Howe and Strauss — are according to these generational experts equipped with attitudes and behaviors making them revolutionary as a “generation [that] is going to rebel by behaving not worse, but *better*” (6). The news suggests an antithetical



tale, however, as a sick trend of school shootings continued into 2001. According to *New York Times* writer Fox Butterfield (on a 1996 episode of *Frontline* called “Little Criminals”), “Society has definitely become more punitive over the last fifteen years, with children in particular. We are trying more children as adults in adult criminal court. We are giving longer sentences. We are faced with more violent children. And we are uncertain how to deal with them.” The turn-of-the-Millennium child romps as did the turn-of-the-century child that Eugene Field observed: precious and precocious, where values collide.

At a Halloween party I attended last year in my Midwestern college town, undergrad vampires blitzed the punchbowl, their false fangs and vodka-breath dazzling my periphery. A skeleton / an Alice / a cowboy kissing a tin man / psychedelically lit disco / and rockabilly pleather. I noticed a young woman, dancing, with artificial blood in her hair and splattered all over what seemed to be a cheerleading outfit. When she turned toward me, I read the felt letters pinned to her sweater: C-O-L-U-M-B-I-N-E.

So many kids injured or murdered, how could anyone mock such a tragedy? And why was I so amused? The massacre at Columbine High School, one of 1999’s “top ten stories” according to everyone from CNN to MTV, is where late-twentieth-century childhood, adult violence, and popular culture collide. A massacre of kids by kids, mass murder in the style of some militaristic video game: Columbine quickly became emblematic of America’s disturbed outsider youth. Well, so asserted adult institutions like media and the government (that simultaneously exploit and decry violence), setting off a wave of paranoia about black-clad teens, and a nationwide blame game concerning the vulnerable state of America’s children.<sup>10</sup> “The Same Old Story, the Same Old Blame,” concluded *USA Today*, sparking an inconclusive self-critique by media. “Moving Beyond the Blame Game,” begged *Newsweek*. “Hollywood Under Fire; Should TV Share the Blame for Violence in America?” asked *TV Guide*. And an article in *Economist* titled “The Outcasts Reply” opens rather tongue-in-cheek:

No one can say the reaction was not swift. In most schools in Colorado, in the week after the massacre at Columbine High School, pupils were suspended if they turned up in trench coats. The killers at Columbine had worn such coats. Therefore, the threat was clear.

(27)

It was this immediate, widespread, and ridiculous scramble to oversimplify a complex issue that made the costume/statement by the young woman at the Halloween party strike a humorous chord, ringing true not as pro-violence but as opposition to Columbine the media-constructed “top story.” In a similar way, the *Primer’s* violence rings true as opposition by not reducing childhood and its realities, by not projecting onto childhood an innocent essence, or revering adult authority for the sake of its adult-ness. In answer to Columbine, “Goth” music, video games, the internet, and Hollywood were individually strung up by parents, senators, and news media, resulting in a discursive bout of talkshow tearjerking, political grandstanding, and uninformed scapegoating that failed to answer what was, after all, the wrong question: Who or what is to blame for

our doomed children? This was best satirized in the crudely animated film (also a phenomenal tv series) that takes aim at propriety's every sacred cow: *South Park, the Movie* (1999).

In a scenario reminiscent of a *Primer* sketch, little Kenny burns himself to death trying to light his own flatulence, imitating characters in a Canadian, adult-rated comedy the South Park gang sneaked into the local theater to see. Kenny's death, the Canadian film's absurdly indulged sexual language, and above all its scatological humor inspire South Park adults to campaign nationally against the film. In a fit for someone to blame, the adults turn their sights on the film's country of origin. Mothers Against Canada rally with this knee-jerk war-cry, "Blame Canada!"

Times have changed. Our kids are getting worse.  
They don't obey their parents. They just want to fight and curse.  
Should we blame the government? Or blame society?  
Or should we blame the images on TV? No. Blame Canada!

Trey Parker's and Matt Stone's *South Park, the Movie* was called "a gleeful swipe at hypocrisy"<sup>11</sup> and they and other post-modern satirists (like Matt Groening, Lynda Barry, and Renee French) each owe a debt to the lost but ancestral Eugene Field, especially his *Tribune Primer* with its perverse fusion of the child's point of view and biting social critique. What's refreshing about his work, and theirs, is an arching empathy with the child as precious that is unflinching but not fooled; the social reality of the child is not falsely sweetened, as well children "get away with murder" more often than they get away with cuteness. Field's children's verse positioned the child as precious because children were so easily lost (remember that as late as 1900, 18% of the U.S. population were dying under the age of five). The sweetness in his verse that we read today as greeting-card glucose then played a vivifying role in bringing about social responsibility for child welfare. His satire, however, is a subversive stitch in the veil that Americans made of this sweetness, a veil that obscured the working class child's social reality, one often too gritty to be sweet. Field's works covered the social bases.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. Field's Postmodern Descendents

In 1999, *Time* magazine named "The Simpsons" the number one television show of the century. In it, the very anti-intellectual dad Homer is breadwinner and transgressor, like Field without the chivalry or educated wit. Marge is a liberal woman with phallic hair yet wearing pearls in the kitchen; it is she who prods the family to church each Sunday. Oldest child Bart is a transgressor like Homer and "the embodiment of all our childhood fun, unfairness, and anxiety." Middle child Lisa is a manifestation of sixties-era education and 70s feminism who "studies hard and plays soft." (McElroy 2-4). She is the show's critical conscience, and when a neighbor asks Homer how he silences that little voice in his head that says "*Think!*", he answers: "You mean Lisa?" Maggie rounds out the family as the fractional part of the standard 2.5 kids. The Simpson couch is an

altar *in situ* before the house's ruling force: the epicenter of Homer's reality, the television set.

Sherri McElroy, in a critical analysis of "The Simpsons," declares that on so many levels the show evokes our postmodern society. "First and foremost, 'The Simpsons' tirelessly works to break down and ridicule the coherence of commonly accepted meta-narratives," with their hometown Springfield operating as "a parody of the nation-state prominence of modernity" (6). "The Simpsons" is its creator's "skewed reaction" to the TV shows of his childhood like "Leave It To Beaver," "Father Knows Best," and "The Donna Reed Show" which pushed impossibly ideal representations of the American family. By "pandering to a kid's eye view," Matt Groening exposes certain realities about the adult world: "parents dispense dopey advice, school is a drag, and happiness can be attained only by subverting the system" (Waters 59). Groening told the *Christian Science Monitor* that satire is "not taking ourselves too seriously," and that solemnity "is always used by authority to stop critical thinking. 'You can't make a joke about that,' is a way of shutting people up" (Mason B7). This could be a manifesto for Eugene Field. Many of his peers insisted that "you can't make a joke about that," burying with Field his child-addressing satire.

Groening's peer and friend, comic strip artist and writer Lynda Barry, panders to the kid's eye view as well, specifically the "inner child." I say this because the setting for her strip, "Ernie the Pook Comeek," is her own childhood era, the 1960s. Barry is like Field in that her "inner child is also her outer child," both finding their way through a tricky adult world (Coburn 23). Rather than wormy apples and deep wells, however, on view in her comic strip we encounter modern themes of preteen angst, zits and crushes, "coolness" and cruelty, loveless or misguided parenting.

Also like Field, Barry is into dolls, but in a macabre fashion, having created a (sub)version of the "pregnant" doll which she calls "Monster Surprise." Pulling yards of knotted cloth-strip from an opening in a typical-looking rag-doll, finally out pops a spider with a painted face. "Kids love it," she tells an interviewer, and (some) adults (like me) chuckle at the thought of being a kid (especially a girl) anxious about the hairy biology of the adult body yet getting anxiety-releasing giggles from Barry's doll. Like Field's *Primer*, if Barry's work appeals to adults, the appeal is in a realistic address of childhood that allows adults to revisit "the simple, awful wonderful truths of what it feels like to be nine or eleven or thirteen years old" (Coburn 23). Pop-psychologists now would call this reclaiming your "inner child."

The "inner child" is a distinctly twentieth century invention, but one Field in the nineteenth century catered to — as doll-caretaker. A recent graduate of a twenty week program for such reclaiming attests: "I stopped feeling worthless. I don't feel like damaged goods anymore. I have the energy to take care of myself physically and spiritually. I have hope."<sup>13</sup> Barry echoes this sentiment when talking to an interviewer about cutting her family out of her life: "My life got a lot better once I cut them out. My health has improved. My relationships are better. I can think more clearly. Who can argue with that?" The popular perception of reclaiming your inner child, however, is less about "cutting out" parents than it is learning to care for (or "parent") yourself where your parents have somehow failed, often including visualization of yourself as

the innocent, wounded child that you must commit to protect and heal.

A darker and more perverse take on childhood is Renee French's anti-cute comic strip *Grit Bath*. I borrow the term "anti-cute" from Daniel Harris's essay "Cuteness." He examines oppositional responses to cuteness in contemporary American culture, how with almost every overblown commercial cutie surfaces an anti-cutie (Cabbage Patch Dolls give way to Garbage Pail Kids, for example). "Although cuteness is still the dominant mode of representing children, the unrealistic expectation it has created in regard to our children's behavior has led to a new aesthetic: the anti-cute" (74). Cuteness projected onto children by adults and media can be an isolating experience, one that falsifies or at least confuses the child's identity; cuteness is the mark that "confirms" a child is precious and innocent, a mark that talk show "thug-" and "slut-kids" are freakishly lacking. Renee French's *Grit Bath* explodes the moral superiority of children that evolved during Field's time, the myth that all children are mother-rot lovin' little innocents. In reality they are also "grubby, intense creatures, a surprising number of whom like to play with — even consume — dirt, boogers, peeling skin." (Dery 201). French's representation of her Jersey childhood in the 1960s and 1970s is, according to cultural critic Mark Dery, chock full of a nasty duality that has jaded twentieth century at large: priest/pedophile, clown/serial killer, sex/death, dolly/dead girl, mass-produced perfection/pock-faced reality. Not to mention the bunny as innocent but stupid:

It's not the childhood sentimentalized by the soft-focus of adult reminiscences [as in Field's poetry], but [as in Field's *Primer*] childhood as seen from a kid's eye view, a parallel reality of bullies, scapegoats, cruelty to animals, playing with dead things, budding sexuality, and creepy little secrets that adults bury deeply — but never deeply enough, it seems, that kids don't dig them up.

(Dery 195)

Dery's analysis credits French with drawing our attention to the child's "primitive" side, the mudhole splasher in all of us, but taking the orgasmic to a level akin to Field's darkest *Primer* sketches. A century ago, Field, in "The Bad Mamma," tapped into the reluctance parents should feel leaving older kids alone with younger kids.<sup>14</sup> Of course parents would like to believe siblings are not cruel to each other; siblinghood, however, always acts as license to the jealous but benign tease or underestimated injury, and sometimes its familial "boundarylessness" gives way quite easily to malignant abuse.

French wants to explode not only the myth that children are innocent, but the myth of the inner-child as innocent. One summer as a child, alone in my father's garage, I tossed grasshoppers into a bucket of gasoline, fascinated by their spastic and futile attempt to escape. No one ever knew, but my "inner child" must recall this experiment with death, and guilt or no guilt now or then the notion of me as a purely innocent child is not something I can reclaim. That does not mean I think we should eschew "the inner child," but even when we embrace that figurative child our histories cannot be revised as faultless. Innocence is a veil constructed by adults and through which adults see child-

hood. We must recognize that which is “underscoring our uncomfortable commonality with what we once were and still may be inside” (Dery 205). The kids in *Grit Bath* suggest that our inner children look not necessarily like doe-eyed “Precious Moments” figurines, but, Dery concludes, “more like Chucky, the pint-sized, knife-wielding sociopath in the *Child’s Play* series” (205). Wielding knives to cut off the tails of kittens.

#### 4. Conclusion

On this side of the misty sea, don’t trust anyone who sings you to sleep. The sun aims with cancer at its target market. “Look out kids, the gleam, the gleam,” rock-matriarch Patti Smith sings youth a millennial *caveat emptor*.<sup>15</sup> Jon Benet’s mascara is still running. “The Monsters Next Door” play their video games.<sup>16</sup> There are metal detectors posted at the intersection of Ghetto and Suburbia. How many black boys haunt Atlanta? Carol-Anne calls for Mommy from inside the poltergeist TV. The “fishermen three” are now Teletubbies. The cradle falls, and its crash is caught on webcam for the world to see.

Known or unknown, Eugene Field’s *Tribune Primer*, like the works of his descendents a hundred years later, blends satire and children’s points of view to reinforce the idea that children are not so naïve or innocent, that adults are often self-serving or hypocritical, and that childhood, even as it models itself after observable adulthood, is independent, complex, and not to be shaken.

*I thank Roger Mitchell for his help and inspiration while writing this paper.*

#### Notes

1. Indirectly quoted from volume 23 of *The Dictionary of Literary Biography: American Newspaper Journalists (1873-1900)*, page 111. This text quotes Field biographer Slason Thompson.
2. Of the ninety-four sketches in Field’s *Tribune Primer*, tone always implies that children are being addressed, but only fifty-seven of them directly address children and/or the child’s world. Of the fifty-seven, twenty-three encourage children to risk limb or life. Of the twenty-three, six feature a child’s demise (“The Deep Well,” “Maggie and the Gas,” “The Gun,” “The [Oil] Lamp,” “The Concentrated Lye,” and “The Peach”).
3. See Farrell and Greene.
4. 1870: One in eight children aged ten to fifteen years employed. 1900: One in six children aged ten to fifteen years employed (Preston and Haines 32).
5. See Preston and Haines.
6. The remaining thirty-seven sketches do not necessarily address the child’s world (i.e. kittens, pranks, school, and home), encompassing an adult world (i.e. statesmen, romance, and the running of newspapers) that surrounds and informs the child’s world. Of these thirty-seven, only twelve are of theme perhaps too vague for children (“The Dramatic Critic,” “The 4th Corporal”) and only 2 overtly address an adult (unless children were assumed to smoke cigars

or have wives). On the other hand, all of these thirty-seven sketches appeal to a child's ear with a parody of school-lesson ("See the Diamond Pin..."). eight of the thirty-seven address children directly about the adult subject ("Little Children, you Must never Drink Bad Whiskey"). Seventeen out of thirty-seven indirectly address children through implication and tone ("If you Neglect your Education and Learn to Chew plug Tobacco, maybe you will be a Statesman some time"). Obviously, from the examples cited here parenthetically, the thirty-seven sketches that address an adult world do so in a way that exposes hypocritical adult figures and institutions to a readership of "little children"—intended or figurative, however you read Field's subtitled dedications to "Odds and Ends."

7. Orgastic should not be confused with orgiastic. Orgastic implies stimulation and release. I think Field would have loved this sexualized metaphor for mudsplashing (see Conrow, 133, about Field and sexuality).

8. These excerpts are from the only known autobiographical text: "Field's Story of His Life," a pamphlet-brief bio introduced by Field as "facts, confessions, and observations for the information of those who, for one reason or another, are constantly applying to me for biographical data concerning myself" (Burt and Cable 127).

9. "There is an average of eighteen violent acts per hour on children's weekend programs," says the "Society for the Eradication of Television Fact Sheet" as published in Adam Parfrey's *Apocalypse Culture* (second edition, 1990, 201). Other factoids: by age eighteen, the "devoted" child viewer has watched around 11,000 television murders and 200,000 commercials, spent more time in front of TV than in the classroom, and would choose tv over their own fathers if forced to. (Do parents choose TV over their children is a question worth asking.)

10. Allow me to make several qualifying points here in response to my own paragraph: A) America's *white* children, perhaps. Race is an issue that I am not addressing here, but I can't ignore the fact that shootings and related violence might be common as rain in many non-white sectors of the country, but these events are not rating as MTV's number one story of the year. (America, however, did see Oprah Winfrey as a tenement mom in a tv-movie called *There Are No Children Here*.) As media discusses children and violence in the context of Columbine and similar shootings, the discussions are centered around mostly white schools in mostly white areas, the perpetrators white males. Their schools were constantly defined as typifying normality (whiteness?)—hence the shock that made the story a headline. Talk shows featured "Warning Signs" for troubled teens that basically asked Americans to target non-conformity (according to white norms? or middle class norms?) like wearing all dark clothes. B) For a thorough survey of representation of African-Americans in children's literature, see Rudine Sims' "Whatever Happened To the All-White World of Children's Books?" in *Innocence and Experience: Essays and Conversations on Children's Literature* (Harrison and Maguire, eds., 1987). C) The President decried school violence while in newspapers (he may have been grateful that) Columbine headlines overshadowed his and NATO's joint order for bombs on Yugoslavia. D) I say adult violence because Kliebold and Harris's militarism in their massacre was not learned by watching other kids. Adults



designed the video games they were obsessed with, one of which was reported to be used by the military to train soldiers.

11. From "The Very Best of TV '99" (*TV Guide*, 12/25-12/31/99). "Blame Canada!", one of twenty songs in the Disney-parodying *South Park, the Movie: Bigger, Longer & Uncut*, garnered a surprise Academy Award nomination, "family-proofed" for Robin Williams' Oscar-night performance of it. A Disney ballad by Phil Collins took the award.

12. Race as well as class. In the first of two sketches to address race, the unracialized image Field gives is racialized in the illustration. "The Awful Bugaboo" is basically The Boogeyman, which Field describes in the text with "Big Fire Eyes and Cold Teeth all over Blood." Frohn the illustrator ignores this description, however, and gives us a grotesque pickaninny with a fried chicken leg. Why do I believe this doesn't necessarily reflect Field's values? In a sketch titled "The Joke and the Minstrel," Field describes the minstrel joke as bald and toothless and a thousand years old. "Go and give the Old, Old Joke to him [the Minstrel] and he will Take care of it very Tenderly. It is his business. He gets Forty dollars a week for it." This seems to point out in a sly way that the economy depended on this "joke" — the exploitation of people of color. The minstrel in this sketch belches a dialogue bubble without question mark: "When is a door not a door." This slyness may be found in "The Awful Bugaboo" after all, because the definition of "bugaboo" according to *Webster's* is "something that causes fear or distress out of proportion to its importance." Frohn's stereotypical image may be subversive in that it suggests a white fear of black-as-savage, a fear out of proportion with social reality.

13. A plug quoted from the web-page for the "Reclaiming Your Inner Child" Group Program, offered at the Center for Creative Growth (John Bradshaw, Trained Therapists) in Berkeley (wyssuyg:/16http:www.creativegrowth.com). Accessed for this paper 8-7-00.

14. See Mark Dery's discussion of Freud's "The Return of Totenism in Childhood" about the "primitive" and "amoral" side of children as related to immediate gratification (202-203). Also revisit footnote 8.

15. Patti Smith. "Glitter in Their Eyes." *Gung Ho* (Arista, 2000).

16. See *Time's* extensive special report on Columbine (May 3, 1999), the cover-title referencing Columbine teen-murderers Kliebold and Harris: "The Monsters Next Door."

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